

CROGHAN TRACT MANAGEMENT COMPLEX

Final Management Plan Conservation Easement Lands

Lewis County

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Planning Area Overview

This document will focus on the recently purchased Conservation Easement lands acquired from Champion International via the Conservation Fund in the Towns of Croghan and Watson, Lewis County and the Town of Webb, Herkimer County. These lands, combined with the adjacent lands acquired as Forest Preserve from the Conservation Fund, are collectively referred to as the Croghan Tract. It is located on the northwesterly edge of the Adirondack Park. All conservation easement lands and waters under the jurisdiction of DEC within the area boundaries will be addressed in this document. It also will address the adjacent forest preserve lands as they effect the access to and management of the conservation easements.

This area consists of two separate areas, referred to as subdivisions in close proximity. The northerly area consists of the former Champion International Corp. lands in the Towns of Croghan and Watson that are generally east of the Adirondack Park boundary, south of the Prentice Road, west of the Herkimer County line and north of the Beaver River. The southerly area consists of the former Champion International Corp. lands in the town of Watson that are generally east of the Adirondack Park Boundary, south of the Beaver River, west of the former Lassiter properties land and north of the Number Four Road.

B. Area Geographic Information

The conservation easement lands within the tract are situated in the Towns of Croghan and Watson, Lewis County and consist of all or part of the following lots: 11E 18N, 12E 18N, 13E 18N, 14E 18N, 15E 18N, 11E 17N, 12E 17N, 13E 17N, 14E 17N, 11E 16N, 12E 16N, 13E 16N, 11E 15N, 12E 15N, 11E 14N of Macomb's Purchase Great Tract No. 5, in addition to 1, 2, 3, 20, 21 and 22 of Watson's East Triangle, in addition to 76, 52, 51, 26, 25, 101, 76, 50, 24, 124, 100, 75, 49, 23, 146, 123, 99, 74, 48, 22, 145, 122, 98, 73 and 47, in addition to Township No. 4 John Brown Tract. For more specific information, see "MAP SHOWING CHAMPION INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION LANDS" Known as Croghan Tract, Projects Herkimer 130 and Lewis. 207", Sheets 1 of 2 and 2 of 2 drafted by Michael J. Contino, Region 6 Real Property. Map is also referred to as DEC Map # 11,535.

C. General Location

The Croghan Tract easement lands are located on the westerly boundary of the Adirondack Park, in the more northerly half. The northerly area is as generally described above, but more specifically as excluding the lands acquired by Maynard Monnat (liber 214, page 88), also the Forest Preserve lands acquired from Champion bounded by the Jakes Pond Road, Main Haul Road and the Sand Pond (Smith) Road, also the lands retained by Champion that are generally referred to as the Soft Maple Development, and also the fee lands of the St. Regis Rod & Gun Club, Inc. (liber 283, page 380). The southerly area is as generally described, but more

specifically as excluding the lands north of a Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. Transmission Line and the Adsit Trail (aka, Eagle Falls Road) retained by Champion that is generally referred to as Beaver # 1, # 2 and # 3, and also excluding two fee strips along and near the Adit Trail.

D. Acreage

The conservation easement portion of the Croghan Tract consists of \pm 13,054 acres. The forest preserve portion of the Croghan Tract, which is largely contiguous with these conservation easement lands, consists of \pm 3,453 acres.

E. General Access

The Croghan Tract is very accessible. The northerly area is accessed by two town roads, the Prentice Road and the Fish Creek Road. Additionally, there are a number of forest product haul roads that provide or can be upgraded to provide good access. The southerly area is accessed by the Adsit Trail (a.k.a. Eagle Falls Road) and also by a haul road leading into the area from the Beecher Road, a town road.

F. History

To be completed later. Generally, the lands have been harvested since the late 1800's.

II. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES, FACILITIES AND PUBLIC USE

A. Natural Resources and Processes

1. Physical

1.a. Terrain/Topography

The topography within the area is generally quite flat. The lowest elevation is approximately 370 meters (\pm 1,214 feet), while the highest elevation is approximately 547 meters (\pm 1,795 feet).

Detailed information on the Tracts' topography can be found on the Still water, New York 7 ½' x 15' USFS map.

1.b. Water and Hydroponic Processes

The water resources are an important component of the ecosystem. It provides a variety of aquatic environments supporting a variety of plant life and animal species in addition to providing a variety of consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities.

Waters in the planning area comprise portions of the Black River and Oswegatchie River watersheds, which are part of the greater Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River Drainage Basins, respectively. The tract's forest preserve and conservation easement parcels contain twelve

names lakes and ponds, covering approximately 300 acres, and five named river and streams totaling 14 miles (see appendix).

Water quality is generally satisfactory with low productivity and fertility typical to the area. On similar waters of the Pepperbox Wilderness Area located directly east of this tract, acidification appears to be a limiting factor.

1) Ponded Water

A total of eight ponds and lakes occur within the tract, of which 5 are named on the 7 ½' x 15' topographic maps (see Appendix 2 - Champion Lands, Croghan Tract - Lakes and Pond Inventory). The waters range in size from ±13 acre Twin Pond South to several unnamed ponds less than 1 acre in size. While separated from the easement lands by a narrow band of land owned by Erie Boulevard Hydropower, L.P.(d.b.a Orion Hydroelectric), Soft Maple Reservoir is a large, significant body of water which will influence the recreational management of the property.

2) Impoundments

There are no existing, manmade impoundments within the easement. The adjacent Soft Maple Reservoir is formed by several dams impounding the Beaver River

3) Water Courses

The conservation easement portion of the tract contains several named and many unnamed streams. Fish Creek, Alder Creek, Roaring Brook and Silvermine Creek all flow into the Beaver River. An unnamed stream flows to the north into Long Pond and thence into the west branch of the Oswegatchie River. Periodic beaver activity occurs on all streams within this unit, forming ephemeral ponds (see appendix 3 - Champion Croghan Tract- River and Stream Inventory).

4) Watershed and Aquifer Information

The lands acquired for conservation easement within the Croghan Tract are within the Beaver River portion of the Black River watershed and the Oswegatchie River watershed.

5) Hydrological Processes

This has climatological patterns similar to the rest of the Adirondacks, with the exception of slightly higher precipitation levels resultant from its juxtaposition to Lake Ontario.

1.c. Other Natural Processes

Wind can be a factor of considerable importance and there is evidence of blowdown on the area. Some windthrow or breakage occurs with common high winds. Windthrow is exaggerated with shallow soils, high water tables and shallow rooting situations. However, several unusual

climatological events have produced greater than normal impacts in this area. This area received some damage during the blowdown of 1950. Additionally, the “derecho” of July 15, 1995, caused significant scattered blowdown of individual trees or small clusters throughout the property .

2. Biological

2.a. Plant Life

The lands on the conservation easement portions of the Croghan Tract are almost entirely forested with the exception of water bodies, certain wetlands and log landings. Plant communities vary with soil type, soil moisture and the harvesting history.

1) Vegetative Cover Types

The Croghan Tract is considered to be in the temperate deciduous forest zone. The predominant, broad, naturally occurring vegetative types include northern hardwood, hemlock and spruce fir. Typical overstory species are red maple, yellow birch, balsam fir, black cherry and sugar maple. The primary force in shaping the plant communities of the parcel has been the long history of harvesting that has generally been a high grading of the stands. This harvesting is also the probable reason for the low incidence of large red spruce. The result is stands that contain more light intolerant species such as red maple, yellow birch and black cherry. They are generally relatively even aged and understocked. Additionally, there are three clearcut areas south of the Prentice Road. They are all less than 25 acres in size. They were reforested with spruce but much of the dominant woody vegetation today consists of seedling and sapling aspen, pin cherry and black cherry.

2) Rare Plants and Ecological Communities

A study was done for Champion International in 1993, for their properties in New York. It included the Santa Clara, Tooley Pond and Croghan districts. It was administered by the Adirondack Nature Conservancy and was written by Jerry Jenkins. The biological survey reviewed existing information and combined aerial surveys, review of type maps and field work. Among other criteria, rare species and unusual communities were identified. Jenkin’s considers that there are several general categories of communities that are found on these properties. The conservation easement portion of the Croghan Tract is known to have upland woods, dense softwoods, major beaver influenced areas, open bogs and open water.

2.b. Wildlife

Only very limited work has been done on the wildlife resources of the area. Appendix A lists the potential wildlife likely to inhabit the area. The Jerry Jenkins report referenced above did not note any rare or endangered wildlife having been observed during his examination of the area.

No comprehensive survey has been completed statewide for reptiles and amphibians, although a New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project has been started. It is based on a 7 ½' quadrangle mapping system. These quads have (not) been done.

More detailed work on wildlife will be done as management plans for a larger area which includes forest preserve and easement lands are developed. This is anticipated to begin in 2000.

2.c. Fisheries

Fisheries data relative to the Croghan Tract are lacking. Some of the waters were surveyed by the NY Conservation Department during the 1931 Biological Survey and later in the 40's and 50's. More recently, several of the waters were looked at by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Unit during 1985 and 1986. One water, Mud Pond, currently stocked by the DEC, was surveyed in 1992. Three were surveyed by the DEC in 1999(see appendix) Generally, it can be said that the areas waters sustain populations of both native Adirondack and non-native fish species. These include brook trout, pumpkinseed, white sucker, brown bullhead, along with golden shiner and yellow perch(see Appendix) Mud Pond supports the tract's only known brook trout population. Based on 1999 data the French Ponds offer potential for brook trout , reintroduction but only if they are reclaimed(to remove yellow perch) and treated with(lime to reduce acid levels). Pending review of new data, other waters on the unit may also offer potential for brook trout management. Up-to-date information is still needed for a number of waters. Therefore, improving the current database, upon which to more accurately characterize the area's waters and their fish populations, and base management planning, continues to receive high priority for the 2000 field season.

2.d. Wetlands (see map - appendix4)

A wetland is defined as any land that is annually subject to periodic or continual inundation by water. It is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp or marsh. To be generally considered a wetland, it must be at least one acre in size or located adjacent to a body of water with which there is a free interchange of water at the surface.

Many small wetlands are present on conservation easement portions of the Croghan Tract. Essentially all of the forested wetlands have had a history that included harvest of the commercial softwood species (under the forest management restrictions in the easement language it is anticipated that these stands will gradually get a higher stocking of softwood species and a larger average stand diameter. Since much of the harvest occurred in the winter, it is probable that the understory plant communities are still fairly intact. The other large impact on wetlands has been from beaver activity. The periodic flood-dry cycle has maintained the scattered open beaver meadows and shallow ponds.

3. Visual/Scenic Resources

The lands and waters in the easement portions of the Croghan Tract are not especially visually

attractive. Both the forest preserve and conservation easement portions are flat to gently rolling, heavily cut northern hardwoods, with skid trails, landings and quite a bit of slash. The pond and river areas and open wetlands, however, are quite picturesque and, while not actually on the easement area, the views of the Soft Maple Reservoir and the Beaver River are also very appealing.

3.a. Travel Corridors

The Croghan Tract is not easily accessible from major travel corridors, but judging by nearby areas such as Stillwater Reservoir, this will not be a major impediment for recreationists. The area is approximately 21 miles east of NYS Rt. 12 and 21 miles Northwest from NYS Rt. 28, both major tourism routes.

3.b. Observation Points

The only good observation points in the Forest Preserve parcels are along the shorelines of the ponds and lakes at the edges of open wetlands or looking out over the Soft Maple Reservoir.

3.c. Other Natural Features

None noted.

4. Sound Environment

The opportunity for solitude is a valuable and desirable feature for certain members of our society who desire to escape the pervasiveness of human made noise that is prevalent in most peoples' lives. Most conservation easements, by their nature, do not provide as pristine a sound environment as most units of forest preserve. Due to the adjacent public roads, primary roads, snowmobile trails, anticipated timber harvesting and ATV trails, and activities of lessees, it is anticipated that much of the area will have human made sounds quite prevalent, at least during some seasons. As such, this unit will not be an area that the public will seek out for solitude.

B. Manmade Facilities

A listing of the major manmade existing facilities, structures and objects on the conservation easement portions of the Croghan Tract and the related and accessory facilities on the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve is found in the Appendix 5.(??? add to final plan)

C. Past Influences

This section will be detailed later. Most manmade influences were the result of the area's history of logging and use by sportsmen clubs.

1. Cultural Resources

a. Historical Areas

Generally, the lands have been primarily used for logging, hunting and fishing. Natural features such as lakes, ponds, and streams or manmade features such as roads and trails were named after users of the area or unique natural features. No areas are known to be especially historic, with the possible exception that during World War II, German prisoners of war were reputedly housed in an old lumber camp and they were detailed to harvest forest products. Two locations for the camp have been identified and it is not certain which is correct. The two locations are old lumber camps which have been converted to hunting camps. They are the camps on the Sand Pond Club and the Taggart Club. If this use is determined to be significant, the actual location should be easily determined.

B. Archaeological Areas

To be completed later. To date, there has not been a search conducted of the State Museum and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation site files. It is not anticipated that there will be any identified sites on these parcels (check with Chuck).???

D. Economic Profiles and the Relationship between Public and Private Land

1. Impact of State Ownership on Nearby Private Lands

The economic base for the general area that is served by the Croghan Tract is based on timber management and dairy farming. In the winter months, snowmobiling is a potent economic force, contributing lots of money to the local economy and creating seasonal employment. Other recreational pursuits including hunting, fishing, hiking, ATVing, canoeing and mountain biking are playing increasingly larger roles in the local economy.

a. Land Resources

The land transaction which provided for purchase of the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve lands also acquired the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement Lands. Both portions of the tract were purchased through the Conservation Fund from Champion International Corporation. While the approximately 3,453 acre fee purchase for Forest Preserve in the Croghan Tract did remove those acres from timber production, the approximately 13,054 acres purchased as Conservation Easement “locked in” those acres for future timber production. Combined with the forest management plan requirements, this will assure higher levels of production of more valuable products. Additionally, another 4,300 acres outside the Adirondack Park were purchased by the Forest Land Group unencumbered by easements and will continue to be managed as timber land. This will positively effect both the timber harvesting community as well as fostering more primary mill activity.

Within the Croghan Tract parcel acquired for Forest Preserve, the acres were available for non-

hunting, non-fishing, and non-trapping recreation starting on July 1, 1999. When the recreational leases on the Forest Preserve parcels held with Champion expire July 1, 2000, these areas will be opened up for all forms of recreation compatible with Forest Preserve purposes, except that lessees may continue to utilize their camps for five years.

The portion of the Croghan Tract acquired for conservation easement purposes will be available for most uses by the public, depending upon the speed of facilities improvement, on July 1, 2000. Certain uses will not be allowed. Hunting and public access will be restricted during the first fifteen years during a portion of the fall. It is anticipated that lessees will be utilizing the property during this time period.

b.. Water Resources

The readily accessible lakes and ponds in the area will contribute to and help maintain stable tourism economy for the area. State ownership of the Croghan Tract will improve access to both Soft Maple Reservoir and the adjoining Beaver River. Current camp residents may be impacted negatively by this increase in use.

2. Impact of Adjacent Private Lands on State Holdings

The Adirondack Park is approximately 55 percent in private ownership, a fact that is often confusing to some visitors. It is this mix that defines the unique qualities of the region, along with the associated restaurants, stores, gas stations, motels and lodges and related tourist services.

a. Land Resources

The private sector's lack of intensive development and commercialism have posed few, if any conflicts with nearby State lands and conservation easements. Adequate State boundary line maintenance and identification is necessary in order to prevent problems with adjoining landowners and those lessees who will continue to have initially sporting rights, and later seasonally exclusive hunting rights on the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement.

It is anticipated that the lessees and landowners will use the opportunities afforded by the Croghan Tract conservation easement in higher proportion than the general population due to their proximity and knowledge of the area.

It is also anticipated that the Future Farmers of America's Camp Oswegatchie, an adjacent landowner, will benefit by having the new Forest Preserve and conservation easement properties available for use in their camping and educational programs. It is anticipated that a major impact the private lands will have will be in terms of contributing to the perceptible human made noise on State lands and conservation easement.

b. Wildlife

Changes in wildlife habitat and species distribution are constantly occurring due to natural processes such as succession, blowdown and disease. Additionally, on conservation easements, like most totally privately held lands, man's intervention through timber harvesting and road/trail construction and use has additional effects by reducing certain tree species, reversing succession, allowing for certain invasive avian predators and increasing harvest possibilities. Exactly how these impacts will effect adjacent state holdings in unknown.

c. Fisheries

None expected.

d. Water Resources

This conservation easement should have no significant effect on the water resources of adjacent state lands except for somewhat increased access to certain ponds and streams.

e. Public Use Potential

The natural resources and recreational opportunity will attract users to this area. This will initially be enhanced, if historic occurrences are accurate predictors, by the publicity attendant to large acquisitions and the public's curiosity. Typically, use levels tend to fall after the first years attendance. In the case of the Croghan Tract conservation easements, initial public use will be conditioned by hunting and access rights retained by the Champion lessee's for the period of their lease.

1. Land Resource

Public use of the land will be concentrated where facilities are provided. The location of parking areas and trails will tend to guide and intensify use in some areas. The main use of this area is expected to be by snowmobilers, who by nature of their sport, stay on groomed trails. Establishment of foot trails to ponds and bogs would tend to concentrate activities there. It is expected that mountain bikers will use the primary roads and corridors in conjunction with motor vehicles, including ATV's, on some trails and roads.

2. Wildlife

The Croghan Tract Forest Preserve parcels have a long history of wildlife use. The primary use has been consumptive use in the form of white tailed deer hunting. Also popular has been ruffed grouse and snowshoe hare hunting and trapping for various species. Casual wildlife observation has also occurred, but largely in conjunction with other activities. The hunting and trapping rights have been assigned to lessees by Champion International Corporation for many years. On the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve, rights will expire with the current recreational leases. Most leases on the Forest Preserve portions of the Croghan Tract expire on June 30, 2000. On the

conservation easement lands, big game hunting will be limited to lessees for fifteen years. But, much small game hunting and non-consumptive use will still be available, except during the period of September 1 through December 31 for the 15 year period.

The impact on trapping pressure is unknown, but no large shift is anticipated.

3. Fisheries

The tract's waters offer some limited potential for public use. See the appendices for known species in the areas waters.

4. Water Resources

a. Flat Water

No significant opportunities for this type of recreation exist on the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement.

b. White Water

No opportunities for this type of recreation exist on the Croghan Tract conservation easement parcels.

F. Access

A discussion of access to the area via roads, motor vehicle and other trails is section I. E. General access, regarding access to the Croghan Tract conservation easement.

G. Relationship to Adjacent Lands

1. Private Lands

a. Heartwood Forestland Fund III (HFF-III)

The westerly parcel is bordered by lands owned by the Forest Land Group that are not encumbered with a conservation easement. These lands will be managed as timber holdings. It is expected the lands will be leased to hunting clubs. Once the existing leases expire, it is expected that the lessees on HFF-III lands, some of whom leased portions of the newly acquired Forest Preserve lands will be heavier users of the Forest Preserve lands due to proximity and familiarity.

b. Small Camp Lots

There are numerous small camp lots adjacent to the conservation easement. They are primarily

located on the former Champion lands adjacent to the Soft Maple Reservoir in the areas commonly referred to as the Soft Maple Development and Beaver # 1, # 2, and # 3. Also, there are nine lots on the Prentice Road which are adjacent to the conservation easement lands, which were subdivided out of a parcel owned by Maynard Monnat. A number of these camp owners are lessees of lands in the conservation easement and new Forest Preserve lands. Due to familiarity and proximity, it is expected that these individuals will utilize the area to a greater degree than the general public.

c. Large Landholders

There are several large landowners (greater than 200 acres) whose properties abut the conservation easement. Generally, those properties are managed for timber, and often also for wildlife. Generally, these properties are hunted for big game by the owners and/or lessees. It is anticipated that these landowners and/or lessees will utilize the easement for non-hunting activity at a greater rate than the general public.

d. Future Farmers of America - Camp Oswegatchie

This property is a residential camp, run by FFA on a year-round basis. In addition to an active summer youth program, FFA and various other groups use the property year-round. This property has about 2.2 miles of boundary in common with a portion of the northerly boundary of the conservation easement lands. It is anticipated that they will be utilizing the property to some degree for their outdoor programming.

2. State Lands

The conservation easement lands are adjacent to areas of Forest Preserve. It is adjacent to the Pepperbox Wilderness Area and a portion of the Watson's East Triangle that has recently been reclassified as wilderness by the Adirondack Park Agency. Additionally, the westerly and central portions of the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve is adjacent to the easement lands. The primary influences that these lands will have on the use of the adjacent Forest Preserve will be two fold. First, it will allow better motorized recreational access to previously inaccessible portions of state land. Additionally, the lower successional stage of the vegetation and the periodic disturbance of timber harvesting will increase the numbers of deer and certain other species on the adjacent forest preserve.

III. MANAGEMENT HISTORY AND POLICY

A. Past and Present Management

1) DEC- Administration

The Regional Director for Region 6, headquartered in Watertown, has management authority over all State lands and conservation easements within the Region, including the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands. Supervision of the Division of Lands & Forests is delegated to the Regional Forester, also headquartered in Watertown, and ultimately with the Supervising Forester located in Lowville. Division of Fish and Divisions of Wildlife activities are directed out of Watertown by the Regional Fisheries Manager and the Regional Wildlife Manager. A senior fisheries biologist and senior wildlife biologist have been assigned to provide input into this interim management plan.

Implementation will be performed by the Division of Operations after adequate additional funding has been provided (see attached budget). The Regional Operations Supervisor is headquartered in Watertown. The actual work would be directed by the Conservation Operations Supervisor III, located in Brownville. The work would be performed by the Conservation Operations Supervisor II and the Operations staff from the Lowville Office.

The Forest Rangers in whose districts the new Forest Preserve lands fall will most likely be assigned the responsibility for patrolling the new areas. The Forest Rangers program is supervised by the Regional Captain in Watertown and a lieutenant in Lowville.

ii. Fisheries

Fisheries - A few of the tract's waters were looked at during the original 1931 NYS Biological Survey, some during the 1940's and 50's, and most recently, by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Unit during 1985 and 86. One lake, Mud Pond, was surveyed by the Department in 1992, and three others in 1999. Mud Pond, is stocked annually with yearling brook trout. All of the areas other waters are managed to self-sustain populations of resident fish species (see Appendix) French Pond (N) was reportedly limed in 1990.

3) Wildlife

Little work has been done on wildlife management in the area, other than the general hunting limitations and harvesting record keeping that the DEC conducts by town and county.

IV. CROGHAN EASEMENT LANDS MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS

This section examines the various constraints, issues and forces affecting the planning area.

A. Management Constraints

Lands purchased as conservation easements are subject to a number of different constraints. Primary are the constraints placed on management options by the rights ceded by the fee title owner to NYS in the easement documents. These define the available management options. Another constraint is lack of personnel to implement the planned activities. The Division of

Lands & Forests needs individuals for planning, managing and monitoring the easement activities. The Division of Operations needs additional personnel for the initial construction and the ongoing maintenance of these other properties. An additional constraint may be inadequate funding to construct, improve or maintain the facilities.

V. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The conservation easement lands acquired from Champion International Corporation that comprise the Croghan Tract are essentially undeveloped forest lands, with only a few hunting camps and two public roads on the property. The character of the lands have been primarily shaped by years of intensive forest products harvesting with its attendant skid roads, landings, and haul roads.

The objectives of the acquisition were to protect the waterways and lands from development, to allow public recreational access to the lands, to enable sustainable forest management and timber production, while ensuring the continuation of traditional uses.

The portions of the tract that were acquired as forest preserve has objectives in common with the remainder of the preserve, with an emphasis on protection of the West Branch of the Oswegatchie and the various ponds while allowing existing recreational uses to continue.

The conservation easement objectives focus more on recreation in the context of a working forest environment. The HFF-III will, under certain restrictions and guidelines, be actively managing the timber resources. Additionally, HFF-III has the potential to and it is anticipated that they will lease existing hunting camps and exclusive hunting rights during the fall big game season. DEC's objectives will be to provide a variety of natural resource based recreational opportunities and access, including motorized recreation while protecting the resource values of the property.

VI. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The following sections address issues, concerns or needs that have been identified by staff or the public and identify management approaches to deal with those subjects. It is assumed that the interim plan will have a life of at least five years. During this time, it is expected that the fee lands will be classified and that the forest preserve parcels will be combined with adjacent Conservation Easements, and perhaps other adjacent Forest Preserve and easement lands into permanent unit management plan configurations.

The primary interest of the public for use of this land appears to be for trail based recreation, access to existing and new Forest Preserve parcels and camping. At one location, interest exists in utilizing the easement area for access to a rock climbing area. To facilitate this, DEC must assure that the area is reasonably safe for appropriate public use and that roads, trails, parking areas and other facilities are properly located, constructed and maintained. The following are

strategies which will be employed.

A. Natural Resources

1. Physical

a. Geological

Gravel resources are a critical need when roads and trails are being constructed, rehabilitated and maintained. Most roads and some trails will be of benefit to the HFF-III for their timber management and also for their lessee's use. DEC will work cooperatively with HFF-III to identify sources of gravel to use on easement lands.

2. Biological

a. Wildlife

Wildlife is a valuable component of the conservation easement. Consumptive use by the public in the form of hunting and trapping will be available for a portion of the year. Non-consumptive appreciation and viewing will be available at all seasons except during the regular big game (aka rifle) season. Game species will continue to be managed by appropriate hunting or trapping seasons as part of larger wildlife management units. Threatened or endangered new game species will be managed by regulating public access and/or directing the public away from the habitats.

b. Fisheries

Survey and inventory all water bodies within the tract. Field efforts will include: descriptions of physical characteristics, water chemistry evaluations and biological inventory. Results will be used to evaluate the status of aquatic habitat and fish populations, and direct management decisions by exploring the potential for stocking or habitat management recommendations.

3. Visual/Scenic Resources

Recreational enjoyment in general is often dependent on visual conditions such as a variety of vegetation types, color contrasts, scenic vistas, land form shapes and edges, etc. The Croghan Tract Forest Preserve lands are generally not especially visually appealing. There is limited variety of vegetation types, tending primarily to hardwoods that have a very evident history of exploitive logging. Luckily, the shorelines of the streams, rivers, ponds and open wetlands have either a lower level of disturbance or enough time has passed to ameliorate the appearance of the heavy cuts. Roadsides in or adjacent to the area also show the effects of the heavy cuts, but this will gradually be less of an issue as the woodlands regrow.

Specific Proposals

Maintain visual range along roadside by mowing along roadsides during normal road maintenance procedures. Make special efforts to maintain elevated roadbed areas to retain view shed of open wetland vistas.

4. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include historic structures and all archaeological resources. These locations can help us understand our past and contain information about where people lived, what they had and how they behaved.

b. Historical

Historical sites refer to locations where a facility was built by man. Structures include buildings and/or foundations, bridges, old roads, and other land related uses.

Specific Proposals

- 1) Prior to site disturbance for construction of any major facility affiliated with this plan, the nature and extend of historical resources in the project area, if any, will be investigated.
- (b) Proposed projects that may or will cause any change, beneficial or adverse in the quality of any historic property will be reviewed, and all feasible and prudent alternatives will be considered together with plans to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property.
- (c) While most of the buildings on the Croghan Tract are believed to be of recent origin, it should be determined which, if any, of the current structures was used to house German P.O.W.'s during World War II. If this proves true, the historical significance of the event, and the structure, should be determined.

b. Archaeological

These sites refer to any places left behind by prehistoric people. The primary informational value of these locations is contained in the spatial relationship between artifacts and features themselves.

Specific Proposals

- 1) Prior to site disturbance for construction any major facility affiliated with this plan, the nature and extent of archaeological resources in the project area, if any, will be investigated.
- 2) Proposed projects that may or will cause any change, beneficial or adverse in the quality of any archaeological property will be reviewed, and all feasible and prudent alternatives will be considered together with plans to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property.

B. Social/Managerial Elements

1. Stewardship

The Division of Lands & Forests has responsibility for the stewardship of many state lands, including conservation easements. The Croghan Tract conservation easement will be managed to allow all appropriate and permissible forms of outdoor recreation, and in a manner which will not cause environmental degradation.

a. Public Information and Education

Specific Proposals

- 1) Unit identification, easement identification and other signage will be installed to help direct appropriate public and lessee usage.
- 2) Work with external groups and the media to get accurate information to the public.
- 3) Work, in conjunction with HFF-III, to educate the lessees as to allowable actions and to ameliorate their concerns.

b. Identification and Access to NYS Lands & Waters

Knowledge of the location of state lands and waters and associated opportunities for public recreation is critical in order to assist the public in utilizing this resource. DEC has a responsibility to the general public and adjoining private landowners to make state boundaries readily identifiable. Well marked boundary lines enable the public to utilize NYS land without trespassing on private lands. Additionally, on this conservation easement, it is especially important to identify the boundary between those lands of HFF-III that have no management

restrictions and the conservation easement lands.

Specific Proposals

- 1) Identify trails suitable for access by mobility impaired individuals
- 2) Additional signage will be placed on the Croghan Tract conservation easement lands to identify the primary roads that access the new and existing forest preserve lands for regular big game season. Specifically, the Champion Main Haul Road, the Spring Pond Road, the Jake's Pond Road and the Sand Pond Road will be signed as "rifle season access corridors". There will be large wooden signs erected at the intersection of the Long Pond Road and the Champion Main Haul Road that specify that these roads access the new forest preserve parcels.
- 3) All corridor, secondary and club snowmobile trails that pass over or by the new conservation easement lands will be posted by DEC snowmobile trail markers, and where appropriate, OPRHP signs.

c. Public Use & Needs

Final purchase of this easement was concluded on July 1, 1999. The easement lands will be open to the public on July 1, 2000. Before that time, DEC will implement the initial actions to allow the public to use portions of the property. DEC will continue actions to implement all necessary access and facilities development during the life of this interim and any final management plans. Primary needs will be to expand access and trails, establish parking, and designate some camping sites.

d. Recreational Activity on Area Waters

No significant canoeing opportunity exists on this area. However, the area is adjacent to the Soft Maple Reservoir, so the potential for canoeing opportunities there should be explored.

e. Facilities Management

On conservation easements, the strategies for management by DEC fall into two broad categories. First, activities that just benefit the public are done by the department in its normal manner. However, activities which benefit both the HFF-III and the public will be done cooperatively, with both parties jointly responsible for construction and maintenance as outlined in the easement agreement.

Specific Proposals

- 1) Maintain all roads and trails on a yearly basis
- 2) Maintain all parking lots on a yearly basis
- 3) Maintain all designated sites on a yearly basis
- 4) Maintain signs as needed
- 5) Perform routine patrols for garbage and debris

2. Administration

State administrative access by motor vehicle will remain the same as that used by Champion International Corporation and its lessees for administrative use and access to the property. The access ways with significant public access will be maintained and reconstructed as necessary to allow for safe passage of the public and cost efficient maintenance by the Division of Operations.

a. Fire Management

The policy of the DEC is to extinguish all wild fires regardless of cause, land classification or ownership. Fire protection for the area is provided for in Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law. The Towns of Croghan and Watson in the County of Lewis are designated as “fire towns” in which the DEC has established and maintains a fire protection system. This is normally done in conjunction with local volunteer fire departments.

Specific Proposals

- 1) The local forest rangers will continue to work with the volunteer fire departments in whose lands the Croghan Tract Easement falls, to develop communication, response procedures and provide wild land fire fighting techniques training.
- 2) Control and contain fires (fire rings, fire use ban during dry conditions, informational signs)

b. Search and Rescue

The local forest rangers will continue to have search and rescue responsibilities for this are as prescribed by law. Most of this activity will occur during the fall and involves lost hunters, but

due to the high rates of snowmobiling use on the property, some rescue work involving snowmobile accidents or breakdowns is a considerable possibility.

- 1) Assure that the informational map/and county/regional snowmobile maps/brochure accurately show all open roads, trails and water bodies and is updated regularly.
- 2) Make sure all boundaries are well-marked.
- 3) Make sure all trails are well-marked.
- 4) Maintain existing relationships with local volunteer fire departments, local snowmobile clubs, Lower Adirondack Search and Rescue and the Lewis County Search and Rescue to facilitate rapid response to emergency situations.

c. Fisheries

Fisheries: Monitoring angler effort aimed at the area's fishery resource. The degree to which this will be attempted when the area is open to the public for angling in 2000 is unknown at this time. Do additional survey work in ponds in subdivision C2. Determine if any additional management actions are needed.

d. Wildlife

Specific Proposals

- 1) Provide adequate, dispersed parking to allow for consumptive/non-consumptive utilization of the wildlife resources present on the Croghan Tract lands.
- 2) Survey the properties to determine the presence of rare, threatened or endangered species or habitats. If identified, direct public use away from those areas during critical periods by restricting parking, ditching and trail development. Also work with the HF-III manager to develop forest management plans that deal with these wildlife/habitat concerns and issues.

e. Law Enforcement

The mission of the Division of Law Enforcement is to protect the environment and natural resources of the State of New York through law enforcement, education and public outreach.

Specific Proposals

- 1) The Environmental Conservation Officers assigned to this area will continue to patrol those portions of the property within their sectors.

f. Staffing

New staff resources will be required to manage this new state land, especially when considered in the context of a land base that has rapidly expanded in the sub-region. See also the attached Champion staff needs.

- 1) To assure that these and other lands in this area are adequately managed, planned for and that projects are properly permitted and constructed, a Preserve Manager position or Forester I position should be assigned to the Lowville Sub-office.
- 2) Due to the increased construction and maintenance associated with the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve lands and associated conservation easements, the following positions are needed:
 - 1 each - Conservation Operations Supervisor 1
 - 1 each - Conservation Operations Supervisor 2
 - 1 each - Maintenance Assistant
- 3) The increased survey, boundary line dispute resolution, appraisal review and related Real Property Services for the Croghan Tract has produced a need for the following positions:
 - 1 each - Assistant Land Surveyor
 - 1 each - Lands & Claims Adjuster II

g. Funding/Budgeting

All DEC programs within the area (except for fish and wildlife) area funded by the State's general fund. Fish & Wildlife functions are supported by a combination of the general fund and the Conservation Fund, a dedicated fund generated by the sale of hunting, fish and trapping licenses.

Specific Proposals

Specific proposals and cost estimates are detailed in the schedule for implementation and the attached Champion Equipment needs (note: this is for all program areas in Region's 5 & 6)

3. Public Use

A listing of all State laws, rules and regulations that apply to the public use to the natural resources within the area is beyond the scope of this document.

a. Overall Use Management/Controls

- 1) No one shall have exclusive use of any portion of state land
- 2) No one shall be allowed to claim any particular tent site or lean-to from year to year
- 3) State property shall not be used for commercial purposes or private profit

Specific Proposals

None.

VII. DETAILED MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

A. Maintenance, Removal and Development of Facilities

Certain activities require more explanation than provided in the previous section or are basically Health and Safety oriented or are of an administrative/housekeeping nature.

1) Barriers/Gates

These facilities are designed to prevent unauthorized and inappropriate motor vehicle or snowmobile usage of State lands where it is believed that a sign will not suffice. The Two types of barriers, gates or earthen berms/boulder berms are used depending on the type of use they are expected to control. All barriers, whether berms or gates, will have “barrier ahead” signs installed. Gates will also be built to standard department specifications, will be painted fluorescent orange and will be outfitted with reflective bands and two standard sized NYS DOT approved stop signs. All cable gates will be removed for safety reasons. Non-conforming gates that the public would reasonably have motorized access to, are necessary and are not deemed safe, will be replaced with DEC standard gates. Gates determined to be unnecessary will be removed. In the future, if vegetative growth, blowdown, washouts or other conditions effectively blockades the road or trail the barriers will be removed. See the barrier and gate standards that are an attachment to the “Primary Roads Standards” document.

Specific Proposals

A. The non-conforming gate on the R.O.W. into the Taggart Club has been removed from the F.F.A. property. If it is re-established, make sure that it conforms to DEC safety

guidelines and is only closed during regular big game (aka rifle) season.

B. Modify or replace gate on Champion Main Haul Road near North bounds of property on the conservation easement lands in order to provide free access to the public on this primary access road to the middle parcel of the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve Lands. Add a lock-open post to prevent the gate from being illegally closed. The gate needs to be retained in order to close off the road during the “mud season”.

C. Bring the gate on the East Side road where the Fish Creek crosses into compliance with DEC specifications or replace. This will prevent public from driving onto the Easement during regular big game season. Remove the “no unauthorized motor vehicles” signs after the easement opens.

D. While not strictly a barrier, the Croghan Main Haul Road should be posted for “No Unauthorized Motor Vehicles” immediately south of the junction with the Sand Pond Road. The Main Haul Road south of this may not be opened until it is brushed and corner radii are improved.

E. Make sure the red painted metal gate just north of the Fish Creek Road on the Champion Main Haul Road complies to DEC specifications. Install a lock-open post to prevent the gate from being illegally locked. The gate needs to be retained in order to close off the road during the “mud season”.

F. Examine the gates at the south end of the East Side Road (iron pipe, blue paint) for conversion to compliance with DEC specifications. This will not need to be accomplished until 2001, as access will be provided from the north. If possible, renovate these gates as the East Side Road Gate will be removed after the Conservation Easement opens and the Crooked Lake Gate will be removed in the second year to gain access to the new Cowboy Beaver Meadow parking lot.

G. Remove the gates on the south end of the Champion Main Haul Road just east of the Fish Creek.

H. Examine the conservation easement for other non-conforming gates or barriers.

I. Paint and sign the gate, and install a lock open post at the intersection of the Boundary Pond Road and the Adsit Trail (aka, Eagle Falls Road) on the Twin Ponds Club. This road will normally be open except during rifle season.

2. Boundary Lines

Well-marked boundary lines and roadside posting enable the public to more fully utilize New York State’s public lands and prevent inappropriate use. Additionally, they prevent the public from accidentally straying onto private lands. In the case of the combination of the Croghan

Tract Forest Preserve and the Conservation Easement lands, after the Champion Recreation leases expire on the Forest Preserve, the careful designation of these lands will help separate the big game hunting leases on the conservation Easements from the public hunting on the new Forest Preserve lands. Regular boundary line maintenance eliminates the need for costly resurveys in the future. Old boundary lines between the new Forest Preserve and existing Forest preserve will be obliterated. The entire Croghan Tract, both Forest Preserve and Conservation Easements will be surveyed via contract surveyors, who will also blaze and paint the lines. The Operations crew will be responsible for signing the property. Temporary signs will be posted around the new fee lands restricting hunting, fishing and trapping until July 1, 2000.

Specific Actions

- a. Survey and re-survey all boundary lines along the periphery of the properties, including monumenting corners, blazing and painting lines and producing a suitable property map. Do via contract survey.
- b. Have Operations post the boundaries and along the primary roads with the new easement signs.
- c. Work with the HFF-III to educate the lessees as to what is permissible language on the posted signs. Establish a deadline for removal (???). I believe a valid point is that having “illegal” posters up may be a violation of the ECL. Also, I believe that an improperly worded posted sign may not be enforceable? Would the property be posted or not???
- d. Remove inappropriate posted signs along primary roads and public (town) roads, if lessee’s do not do promptly.

3. Bridges

It is important to examine and maintain these facilities regularly to identify potential safety concerns. Ditches and culverts are especially vulnerable to clogging with leaves, gravel, and other debris. Road bridges that support vehicle traffic should be inspected annually and closed when found unsafe. Inventory bridges that are greater than 20 feet in length that need DOT inspection and determine posting limit if any. All bridges open to the public will require guard rails.

Specific Proposals

- a) Rebuild the southern bridge over Fish Creek on the Champion Main Haul Road. Approximately 30' span, untreated log stringers that are starting to deteriorate. Currently untreated cross planks. No guard rails. Replace with a bridge designed and built to DEC specifications. Note: Consult with Orion Hydroelectric to

determine if current bridge location is on their property or within FERC boundary. Consider relocating slightly upstream.

- b) Replace deteriorating culvert pipe (± 36 ") plus 2 smaller culverts on north end of Champion Main Haul Road.
- c) Replace Crooked Lake Outlet Culvert (± 36 ") and Silvermine Stream culvert (± 48 " with wooden cribbing) and several smaller culverts on the Champion Main Haul Road between Fish Creek Road and the junction with the Sand Pond Road.
- d) Examine the easement area south of the Beaver River (Subdivision C-2) for hazardous conditions. Evaluate the value of replacing any unsafe culverts/bridges or closing the roads to public travel.

4. Buildings

Only a few new buildings will be allowed on this conservation easement. The HFF-III may construct new forestry use structures are agreeable to DEC. The HFF-III may place a forest products concentration area on the Croghan Tract conservation easement on the Prentice Road which might (???) contain a building(s) or shed(s). The HFF-III may, within a predetermined 5 acre area, build two principal buildings and accessory structures, on each of the two allowed subdivisions on this tract. The two locations on the Croghan Tract are on the Buckhorn Mountain Road and the Boundary Pond Road. Additionally, HFF-III has the right to allow its lessee camps to exist during the next eighteen years (the fifteen years of the reservation period plus up to three years for removal. Some camps may be relocated from the Croghan Tract forest preserve to the easement lands. Other than these exceptions, no buildings may be constructed or be maintained. As previously discussed, one of the camps on the property may have been used as a German Prisoner of War camp. The historical significance should be assessed before the buildings are removed.

5. Buoys

No buoys are located on the property.

6. Cable Crossings

There are no known crossings located on the Croghan Tract conservation easement. If any are located, they will be evaluated for their utility, safety and compliance with existing guidelines and regulations.

7. Camping Sites

Camping will be allowed anywhere on the Croghan Tract conservation easement in accordance with the prohibition in the ECL and Title 6 NYCRR. Additionally, some designated campsites will be established where it is believed that there will be high interest in camping. More sites may be designated later as interest patterns develop. All designated sites will be shown on the map/brochure. Designated sites near the Soft Maple Reservoir may require agreement and coordination with Orion Hydroelectric (???)

Specific Proposals

- a) Construct 4 primitive walk-in/canoe-to campsites on the east side of Soft Maple Reservoir.
- b) Construct 2 primitive drive-to campsites on east side of the Fish Creek inlet to the Soft Maple Reservoir.

8. Communication Facilities

None are present, nor anticipated.

9. Dams

No known manmade dams exist on the property.

10. Docks

No docks will be permitted on easement lands.

11. Dumps/Garbage

No facilities for the collection of garbage will be developed. A policy of “carry it in, carry it out” will be implemented and all recreationists and visitors will be required to carry away all refuse, trash, garbage, litter or other offensive material which they may bring onto the property. Operations crews will periodically visit the parking areas, the designated sites and the roadsides to remove trash that has been deposited on the sites. The forest ranger force will try to prevent littering during their periodic patrols.

Specific Proposals

- a) Examine the property to determine if there are any unknown debris or rubbish currently existent.
- b) Make sure that HFF-III disposes of all refuse at the end of the fifteen year camp reservation

12. Fireplaces/Fire Rings

Fire rings will be established at all designated sites. No further establishment by DEC is expected, however campers will probably build rings at informal campsites.

13. Fishing Access Sites

Construct a simple canoe/cartop boat launch to the Soft Maple Reservoir near the Fish Creek Bridge. Discuss with Orion the property boundaries and FERC location. Also discuss their launch on the west side of Soft Maple Reservoir, in terms of capacity and use levels.

14. Gravel Pit

As allowed in the easement document, DEC will take gravel from pits on the property for use for construction and maintenance of roads, trails and other facilities. HFF-III will provide direction as to the pits to be used.

15. Helicopter Landing Sites

None are anticipated or existent.

16. Historic Locations, Memorials and Plaques

No facilities of this nature are located on the Croghan Forest Preserve Tract, except possibly the Prisoner of War WWII era work camp.

17. Lean-tos or Other Camping Structures

No lean-tos will be built on this area during the interim management period. Campers erecting temporary structures must remove them at the end of their stay. Nothing may be nailed to any trees.

18. Parking Areas

- 1) Construct a 15 car and trailer parking area at the most northerly gravel pit for ATV, horse and mountain bikes users. This is located on the Main Haul Rd. about 1/4 mile south of the northern boundary.
- 2) Construct a four car parking area near the Soft Maple Reservoir Fishing Access Site
- 3) Construct a four car parking lot at Sand Pond.
- 4) Construct a four car parking lot at Black Bear Corners on the Cowboy/Beaver Meadows Road (where the roads splits off the the two camps).

19. Picnic/Day Use Areas

No areas of this type will be established in the interim management period.

20. Pit/Privies

A pit privy or porta-potty, will be installed at the parking lot for the canoe/cartop launch proposed for Fish Cr./Soft Maple Reservoir. It will be handicapped accessible. Privies will be installed at each designated campsite site.

21. Signs

Local Forest Rangers shall inspect trailheads and trails to insure that all signs are in place and to observe any vandalism. If replacements or repairs are necessary, they shall be made in a timely manner by DEC personnel. Additionally, during routine trail and road maintenance, Operations personnel will note, and replace defective or missing signs.

All signage on the conservation easement area, with the exception of signs on the areas reserved by the HFF-III for the concentration yard, principal buildings, or recreational camps, must comply with Department standards (size, wording, color, etc.) The sign locations must be approved by the area manager and be jointly acceptable to DEC and HFF-III. DEC signs will be restricted to area identification signs, boundary markers, trail and facility identification signs, boundary markers, trail markers, trail identification signs and signs identifying appropriate and inappropriate use. Also OPRHP snowmobile trail signs and yellow-on-brown directional signs will be able to be installed on the property by the local snowmobile club. No signs directing snowmobilers to specific businesses will be allowed. Additionally, road names and/or numbering signs for the road system shall be of type, size and color mutually agreeable to DEC and HFF-III. Hunting camp lessees may erect suitable posting signs subject to approval of the text by DEC.

22. Trail Facilities

a. Foot - (total proposed - .75 miles)

- 1) Construct and sign a foot trail to lead to the 4 campsites on the east shore of Soft Maple Reservoir. Combined use for both campers and DEC Administrative use - .75 mile
- 2) Construct a foot trail from a spur road off the southern end of the Main Haul Rd. to the Eagle Canyon cliffs

b. Horse

No horse trails will be specifically designated in this interim plan, but it is expected that some use will occur on the primary access roads. It is also expected that some use will occur as equestrians and horse-drawn wagons traverse the easement to access the adjacent wilderness area. The northern 15 vehicle with trailer parking area will handle equestrian

vehicles.

c. Canoe Carry Trails

No canoe carries or trails will be designated.

d. Snowmobile Trails

The existing snowmobile trail system will be maintained by designating the primary access roads that are part of this system as either corridor, secondary or club trails. This will occur on both the Croghan Tract Forest Preserve lands and on the Conservation Easement lands. However, it is not anticipated that all primary trails will be needed or used in any given year. DEC will coordinate opening and closing of the four primary roads (main haul, east side, west side, and blue line roads) that will make the main north-south crossing of the easement. One goal will be to reduce the trail length that log trucks are sharing with snowmobile traffic. It will be attempted to, at the request of the Long Pond Snosled Club, Inc., to keep two of the routes open per year.

- 1) Main Haul Road, West Side Road, East Side Road - Bring all three up to OHRP corridor snowmobile trail specifications. Sign Main Haul Road and West Side Road as corridor trails (Corridor 8). Note that Main Haul Road will also be a current motor vehicle trail and West Side Road will also be an ATV road.
- 2) Jakes Pond Road - Sign road as a snowmobile trail to parking area - ??? mile
- 3) Sand Pond Road - (aka Smith Road) - Sign road as a snowmobile trail to Forest Preserve Wilderness Area line??? mile
- 4) Coyne Trail - (aka Hogsback Trail) - Reconstruct improved winter haul road that starts on the Main Haul Road, approximately .95 mile west of its intersection with Silvermine Creek. The trail runs southerly until it meets the boundary line between the easement land and the Coyne (formerly Lassiter) property. Currently, the Long Pond Snow Sled Club, Inc. has negotiated a realignment of Corridor # 8 that previously went east of Crooked Lake with representatives of the Coyne ownership. It is especially important that ATV use is both not allowed and physically blocked. This is due to the concerns over ATV use by the landowner to the south. Gating or bridge removal will be provided at a strategic point to keep ATV's off the adjacent property.
- 5) West Side - Main Haul Connector - This will be signed and become the main route for corridor # 8, both by the West Side Road and also via the Main Haul Road. This will use the existing alignment that goes on to the FFA property to eliminate the wetland crossing. Agreement has already been obtained from the FFA management.

e. Motor Vehicle Trails - Passenger Car/Pick up Truck

All motor vehicle trails open to the public will be brought up to at least to standards as jointly agreed to by Heartwood Forestland Fund III (HFFIII) and DEC. See attached standards. Initial work will focus on improving the sight distance via brush removal and improvement of the curve radii.

- 1) Sand Pond Road (aka Smith Road) - Finish road by extending it to the boundary with the Pepperbox Wilderness Area. The first .35 mile requires just surfacing gravel. The remaining .55 miles needs major reconstruction - .9 mile.
- 2) Main Haul Road - Upgrade the Champion Main Haul Road from its intersection with Sand Pond Road southerly and westerly to the Fish Creek Road. Fix all bridges and culverts as necessary. ??? Miles
- 3) Cowboy Beaver Meadow/Crooked Lake Roads - Reconstruct/upgrade these roads to vicinity of Burnt Falls. Will require re-routing Crooked Lake Road around Crooked Lake Preserve Property and McCabe (aka Dog) Pond. This is necessary as it appears that there is not a ROW for the public across the Crooked Lake Preserve property. In order to provide access to the Pepperbox Wilderness Area at a point that Cowboy Beaver Meadow Creek may be crossed (i.e. the existing bridge), the road needs to be re-routed. It is anticipated that the re-routing will take approximately .9 miles of new construction. Easterly of the point where the re-route hits the Cowboy Beaver Meadow Road, approximately .6 mile of trail will need to be upgraded. The motor vehicle access by the public will terminate at the intersection of the trails leading to the two leased camps (to be called Black Bear Corners Parking Area). Public access from this point will be on foot. If it is determined that this routing is not feasible, an alternative route will be explored from the Buckhorn Mountain Road heading southerly and rejoining Cowboy Beaver Meadow Road. If this does not prove feasible, then the Buckhorn Mountain Road will be used to access the Pepperbox W.A. It is anticipated that this will be done during the year 2000 construction season. However, if funding or other constraints initially prevent this, then the route will be constructed to allow ATV traffic to reach the parking area.
- 4) Build a spur road off the southern Main Haul Rd. to the trail head for the Eagle Canyon and cliffs.

e) II. Motor Vehicle Trails - All terrain vehicles (ATV)

All ATV trails that are located on the conservation easement will be brought up to at the standards that are jointly agreed to by HFF III and DEC. See attached standards. Initial work will focus on improving sight distances and hardening tread where necessary. It is planned to initially provide ATV access on the Main Haul Road and the West Side Road. The Main Haul Road to West Side Road Connector will not be initially opened, pending study of the feasibility and environmental impact. Additionally, Jakes Pond Road, Sandy Pond Road and Crooked Lake/Cowboy Beaver Meadow Road will be opened to their parking areas. East Side Road will be opened to 2001, after some modification. A route between East Side Road and the Main Haul Road will be evaluated in year 2000 for possible construction in 2001. All ATV use will be restricted to the period between May 10 and October 17???? of each year, except those roads that are rifle season access roads which shall continue to be open to the first Sunday in December. All ATV users must be licensed and insured and all operators and riders must wear approved helmets.

- 1) Main Haul Road, Sand Pond Road, Jakes Pond Road, Crooked Lake/Cowboy Beaver Meadow Road - all of these roads will be of adequate standards for use by ATV'S when made adequate for passenger vehicles and pickups.
- 2) West Side Trail - This will be open for both ATV's and snowmobiles. It will be upgraded in year 2000 to allow ATV usage. Additional reconnaissance is necessary, but preliminary work indicates that the tread on approximately .3 mile may need to be hardened. Additional work will be needed on sighting distances and removal of stones.
- 3) East Side Road - This will be upgraded in 2001, to allow use by ATV's. It is in existing use by lessees with ATV's at this time. Some work may be necessary at one stream crossing, and sight distances may need improvement. A trail to bypass the main lessee camp complex located on this road may be installed. The lessees would be allowed to install gates that conform to DEC specifications to preclude public access through their camp complex if they desire, if the bypass trail is constructed
- 4) Roaring Brook Trail (aka???-I believe the Sand Pond Club may have a name for this trail) - This secondary trail will be explored to determine its feasibility and cost. It would generally follow the route that is currently being used by the Sand Pond Club to a shortcut between their camp and the Main Haul Road. Concurrence is necessary on the route of this trail by the HFFIII in the Land Management Plan. It is expected that considerable tread work will be necessary in addition to installation of some culverts. Total trail distance is unknown???

f) Trailheads/Parking Areas

Parking areas will be established on the Croghan Tract conservation easement as generally described in VII.A.18.1) to VII.A.18.???. The parking areas on Sandy Pond Road, Cowboy

Beaver Meadow Road (Black Bear Parking Area), the north end of the Main Haul Road, at the head of the foot trail to Soft Maple Reservoir and at the fishing access site.

- 1) Construct a 15 car and trailer parking area at the most northerly gravel pit for ATV's, equestrians and mountain bikes. The dimensions should approximate 70' x 140'. It should be hardened with base and surfacing gravel and be designed for drive through usage.
- 2) Construct a 4 car parking area near the Soft Maple Reservoir fishing access site. It should be approximately 40' x 35' and be hardened with base and surfacing gravel.
- 3) Sand Pond Road and Cowboy Beaver Meadow Road - construct a 4 car parking area at both parking areas. It should be approximately 15' x 40'. The base should be bank run gravel topped with surfacing gravel. Note: If only ATV trail access is initially provided on Cowboy Beaver Meadow Road, a parking area for the ATV's of the public should be cleared at Black Bear Corners.
- 4) Construct a 4 car parking area at the intersection of the Main Haul Road and the foot trail to the Soft Maple campsites. Have the foot print approximately 15' x 40'. The bank should be bank run gravel topped with surfacing gravel. It is anticipated that most use of these campsites will be by water.

22. Utilities

No utilities will be necessary for DEC operations on this conservation easement. Existing power lines and telephone lines exist on the property of Prentice Road, Fish Creek Road and the Adsit Trail (??? - Keith check this). Additionally, Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. has easements for existing and future power transmission lines (??? - Keith check with Real Property on this.) HFF III has very limited rights in the Reserved Rights Section of this easement.

23. Waterway Access Site

See cartop/canoe launch previously referred to in VII.A.13. Fishing Access Sites.

24. Water Pipe

No known water pipes are on these parcels.

25. Water Springs/Wells

Most of the camps are believed to have spring boxes or driven well points with pumps. The points will be pulled after the camps are removed. Spring boxes will be evaluated, and may be left if located near a designated campsite.

26. Wildlife and Fisheries Structures

- a. Fisheries - No fisheries structures are anticipated
- b. Wildlife - No wildlife structures are anticipated

B. Access by Persons with Disabilities

For people with disabilities, as for able-bodied people, outdoor recreation offers opportunities for fun, health, well-being, independence, and social interaction. DEC is committed to making lands under its jurisdiction more accessible to all people.

Within the Croghan Tract conservation easement, the programs offered by the Department to the public will include a variety of recreational activities within a wild setting. Activities will include hiking, birdwatching, canoeing, camping, and fishing - all within a setting of relative quiet and peaceful solitude. The Department plans to manage the Croghan Tract conservation easement in a manner which will offer unique and outstanding opportunities to all its visitors, including those with disabilities who desire to participate in these activities.

Specific Proposals

- 1) The roads leading into and through the Croghan Tract conservation easement and forest preserve will provide opportunity for passive observation of nature and the forest environment, either by foot, motor vehicle or snowmobile. Road maintenance on motor vehicle trails that cross open marshes will emphasize brush control to keep the viewshed open.
- 2) The above mentioned roads will provide access to areas on adjacent forest preserve suitable for big game hunting.
- 3) The fishing access site on the Fish Creek inlet of Soft Maple Reservoir is being made handicapped accessible for the mobility impaired. A handicapped accessible toilet facility is also being provided. Note: construction of this site is pending discussions with Orion Hydroelectric and review of FERC documents.
- 4) One of the roadside campsites at the Fish Creek inlet of Soft Maple Reservoir is being made handicapped accessible for the mobility impaired. A handicapped accessible toilet facility is also being provided at the parking area. Note: construction of this site is pending discussions with Orion Hydroelectric and review of FERC documents (??? - Keith we need to discuss this with Lenny Ollivett and DSS in near future).

SECTION VIII. SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION/BUDGET

The completion of site specific projects and activities will carry out the primary motivation behind this plan to allow public recreational use while protecting the natural resources of the area. The improvement identified in this document are proposed to be accomplished from shortly after closing to within the next five years. The following schedule will be implemented contingent upon budget approval. Estimated costs are in addition to normal program funding.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Cost</u>
2 (2000)	1. Order signs for all easement purposes	\$3,000
before July 1	2. Clear brush and improve site radius on southern 5.25 miles of Main Haul Road	
	3. Upgrade/reconstruct West Side Road to ATV specifications, including tread work and brushing 1.44 miles	\$24,000
	4. Sign roadways with informational/educational Signs for public, including easement signs	\$5,000
	5 Identify with HFF III the gravel pits to be used this year and amount of gravel to be used	
	6. Make sure posted signs conform to easement language along roadways	Staff/ HFF III
	7. Bring non-conforming gates into compliance by removal, signing, painting or replacement. Includes Installing "lock-open" posts and "barrier-ahead" signs. 6 gates.	\$7,000
	8. Prepare informational brochure/map	\$5,000
<u>Year</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Cost</u>
2 (2000 after July 1)	1) Complete upgrading/reconstruction of southern 5.25 miles of Main Haul Road	\$132,000
	2) Upgrade/construct 1.65 miles of Crooked Lake and Cowboy Beaver Meadow Road	\$ 78,000
	3) Construct 5 parking lots on property	\$ 60,000
	4) Continue Boundary Line Survey	Contractors

		\$210,000
	5) Rebuild Fish Creek Bridge - Champion Main Haul Rd.	\$460,000
	6) Construct and sign foot trail (.75 mile) to walk-in canoe-to campsites	\$ 2,000
	7) Evaluate East Side Road and Roaring Brook Trail for ATV and snowmobile use	Staff
	8) Remove garbage	Staff
	9) Develop plan for removal of garbage, including signing	staff
	10) Conduct Angler Survey (??? Bill G.)	Staff
	11) Maintain, sign, improve snowmobile trails	\$ 10,000
	12) Install 2 unit identification signs and standards	\$ 2,000
	13) Construct 6 walk-in or drive-to campsites	\$15,000
	14) Construct handicapped accessible canoe/cartop boat Launch site w/sign	\$ 19,500
3(2001)	1) Construct East Side Road and Roaring Brook Trail for ATV and snowmobile use (tentative) ± 3.2	\$ 15,000
	2) Evaluate bridge at Burnt Falls	
	3) Construct road/foot trail to Eagle Canyon	\$???

APPENDIX

Index of appendices

Appendix 1	Wildlife
Appendix 2	Lakes and Ponds Inventory
Appendix 3	River and Stream Inventory
Appendix 4	Wetlands Map
Appendix 5	Inventory of Facilities

Appendix 1: Wildlife

The area contains potential habitat for **40** species of mammals, **36** species of birds, **8** species of reptiles and **16** species of amphibians.

Key to Abbreviations:

Un=Unprotected G=Game R=Resident
Tr=Transient Oc=Occasional P=Protected

Major species include:	Scientific Name	Status	
MAMMALS			
Big Game:			
White Tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	P	G R
Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>	P	G R
Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>	P	G Tr
Furbearers:			
Eastern Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	P	GR
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>	P	GR
Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>	P	GR
Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethica</i>	P	GR
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>	P	GR
River Otter	<i>Lutra canadensis</i>	P	GR
Mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>	P	GR
Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	P	GR
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	P	G R
Gray Fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	P	GOc
Ermine	<i>Mustela erminea</i>	P	GOc
Long-tailed Weasel	<i>Mustela frenata</i>	P	GOc
Striped Skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	P	G Oc
Virginia Opossum	<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>	P	GOc
Marten	<i>Martes americana</i>	P	GOc
Small Game:			
Varying Hare	<i>Lepus americanus</i>	P	GR
Woodchuck	<i>Marmota monax</i>	Un	UnOc
Other:			
Porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>	Un	UnR
Chipmunk	<i>Tamias striatus</i>	Un	UnR
Red Squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus</i>	Un	UnR
Nn. Flying Squirrel	<i>Glaucomys sabrinus</i>	Un	UnR

APPENDIX A-1 (Continued)

Masked Shrew	<i>Sorex cinereus</i>	Un	Un R
Water Shrew	<i>Sorex palustris</i>	Un	UnR
Smokey Shrew	<i>Sorex fumeus</i>	Un	UnR
Pigmy Shrew	<i>Sorex hoyi</i>	Un	UnR
Short-tailed Shrew	<i>Sorex brevicauda</i>	Un	UnR
Hairy-tailed Mole	<i>Parascalops breweri</i>	Un	UnR
Little Brown Bat	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Un	UnR
Deer Mouse	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	Un	UnR
White-footed Mouse	<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i>	Un	UnR
Sn. Red-backed Vole	<i>Clethrionomys gapperi</i>	Un	UnR
Meadow Vole	<i>Micotus pennsylvanicus</i>	Un	R
Rock Vole	<i>Micotus chrotorrhinus</i>	Un	UnR
Sn. Bog Lemming	<i>Synaptomys cooperi</i>	Un	UnR
Nn. Bog Lemming	<i>Synaptomys borealis</i>	Un	UnR
Meadow Jumping Mouse	<i>Zapus hudsonius</i>	Un	UnR

Appendix 2- Champion Lands, Croghan Tract, Lake and Pond Inventory - Location, Water Chemistry

Key No.	Water	County	Town	Size (ac)	Water Quality Status - pH (year)
p181	Gregg Lake	Herkimer	Webb	18	Acidified, pH 4.6 (86)
p184	Green Pond	Herkimer	Webb	12	
p227	Mud Lake	Lewis	Croghan	67	Satisfactory, pH 5.6 (85)
p228	French Pond (N)	Lewis	Croghan	19	Satisfactory, pH 5.8 (99)
p229	French Pond (S)	Lewis	Croghan		Acidified, pH 4.8 (99)
p436	Sand Pond	Lewis	Watson	74	Warm, Acidified, pH 5.0 (84)
p416	West Pond (S)	Lewis	Watson	19	Warm, Acidified, pH 5.1 (99)
p417	West pond (N)	Lewis	Watson	8	
p432	Twin Pond (S)	Lewis	Watson	13	
p442	McCabe Pond	Lewis	Watson	3	
p444	Spring Pond	Herkimer	Webb	9	
p5149	Twin Pond (N)	Lewis	Watson	7	
p5153	unknown	Lewis	Croghan		
p5319	unknown	Lewis	Croghan		
p5182	unknown	Lewis	Watson		
p5156	unknown	Lewis	Watson		

Appendix 2- Champion Lands, Croghan Tract
Lake and Pond Inventory - Fish species and management.

Key No.	Water	Major Fish Species	Past Management	Present Management	Future Management
p181	Gregg Lake	ST, WS	DEC '31 & '49; ALSU '86	NSA Resident species	Survey
p184	Green Pond	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p227	Mud Lake	GS,ST,CC,PS,BB	DEC '31, '70,'92; ALSU '85	Adirondack Brook Trout - Stocked	Survey
p228	French Pond (N)	YP, BB, PS	DEC '99, ALSC '86, limed 1990; ST stocked in '50's	NSA Resident species	Potential lime & reclaim
p229	French Pond (S)	YP, BB	DEC '99	NSA Resident species	Potential lime & reclaim
p436	Sand Pond	YP,BB,WS,PS	DEC '41& '99; ALSU '84, Stocked 1929-50 ST	NSA Resident species	Same
p416	West Pond (S)	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p417	West pond (N)	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p432	Twin Pond (S)	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p442	McCabe Pond	None	ALSC 1985	None	Survey
p444	Spring Pond	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p5149	Twin Pond (N)	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p5153	unknown	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p5319	unknown	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p5182	unknown	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey
p5156	unknown	unknown		NSA Resident species	Survey

Fish species: ST brook trout, BB brown bullhead, PS pumpkinseed, YP yellow perch, GS golden shiner, CC creek chub, WS white sucker.

Survey by: DEC - Dept. Of Environmental Conservation - Reg. 6 Fisheries; ALSC - Adirondack Lakes Survey Corp.

NSA - Natural spawning adequate

Appendix 3- Champion Croghan Tract - River and Stream Inventory

Key No.	Stream	Size (miles)	Major Fish Species	Management Comments
Ont 19-40-18	Alder Creek	2.0	Unknown	NSA Resident species
Ont 19-40-15	Fish Creek	6.7	Unknown	NSA Resident species
Ont 19-40-18-7	Spring Pond Outlet	1.0	Unknown	NSA Resident species
Ont 19-40-14-4	Roaring Brook	2.7	Unknown	NSA Resident species
SL 25-73	W.Br. Oswegatchie River	2.0	ST, associated minnow species	NSA Resident species

NSA - Natural spawning adequate

WHG 4/6/99